

104

CRISIS IN LIBERIA

Y 4. IN 8/16: C 86/4

Crisis in Liberia, Hearing, 104-2...

HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED FOURTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

MAY 8, 1996

Printed for the use of the Committee on International Relations



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CRISIS IN LIBERIA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 1996

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 2:05 p.m. in room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen [chairperson of the subcommittee] presiding.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The subcommittee will come to order. Today the subcommittee meets to address the crisis in Liberia—an issue that affects the United States and all of us at many different levels, with humanitarian, political, and security concerns clamoring for an immediate end to the killing.

The breakdown of law and order in Liberia, the loss of innocent lives, the massive destruction that has taken place in Monrovia over the course of the past several weeks, are cause for grave concern for the United States, for the African continent, and for the international community. It is a situation that strikes at the very fiber of human compassion, as thousands are threatened and displaced by the increased hostilities. It is a situation reminiscent of other recent conflicts with the potential to become a humanitarian cataclysm, spilling over into neighboring countries and destabilizing the entire region.

However, the crisis in Liberia is indicative of a far greater problem, a disease that is slowly infecting countries in Africa, creating an environment of conflict and turmoil—that is, the contradiction between the goals of the people of these African countries, and the personal interests and recalcitrant behavior of some political and rebel leaders.

It has been emphasized many times during the course of hearings held by this subcommittee, but it must be mentioned again.

The people of Liberia desperately want peace; yet it is the faction leaders who repeatedly choose to pursue their political objectives through violent means with a total disregard for the suffering inflicted on their fellow Liberians. The people of Liberia want a cease-fire. They want a return to normalcy. The people of Liberia want to see their country flourish once again.

While certain problems created by the war will be difficult to surpass, it is clear that Liberia's economic future holds much potential if the war ends soon and political stability takes a firm hold. Specifically to U.S. interests, many believe that Liberia could once again become an important strategic, diplomatic, and economic partner to the United States.

Nevertheless, none of this will be possible until rebel leaders set aside their appetite for power and place the well being of their country above their personal desires. The time is now for rebel leaders to return to negotiations and end the fighting.

The United States and the international community are ready and willing to help, but only if there is a demonstrated commitment to the peace process and to a cease-fire.

Outside actors cannot secure a future of peace and prosperity to Liberia. They cannot build a sense of national unity until the feuding leaders demonstrate that they are ready for peace themselves. The United States and the international community can ameliorate somewhat the pain and suffering that are the effects of the fighting, but only the rebel leaders can end the crisis.

The United States has long worked toward an end to the bloodshed and a reconciliation that will allow all the people of Liberia to live in peace. Throughout, we have been filled with optimism that this goal would be achieved but, after 13 peace agreements implemented and then broken, our hopes have quickly turned to disappointment.

Today, however, we are once again filled with expectations as an ECOWAS summit is taking place in Accra, Ghana with certain rebel leaders and representatives of the various factions. This could be the crucial turning point. However, the news from Accra has not been good. So here to tell us straight off what has happened are witnesses here today.

First, we will hear testimony from Secretary of State for African Affairs George Moose, a dear friend of our subcommittee, who has just returned from Liberia and, in fact, as all of us know from press accounts, had a somewhat frightening experience when the U.S. embassy compound in Monrovia was hit by gunfire. He has a long and distinguished foreign service career which has included serving as ambassador to Benin and Senegal, and numerous Africa-related positions here in Washington and at the United Nations. We appreciate Secretary Moose's ongoing cooperation with our subcommittee and thank him for being here with us today.

He will be followed by Vincent Kern II, who is Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs. Mr. Kern has extensive training and experience in national security affairs, with particular emphasis in international and comparative politics of Africa and U.S. foreign policy toward the continent. He has served as a member of working groups and special task forces addressing difficult U.S. foreign policy concerns in Africa, and is joining us today to render his expertise on the situation in Liberia.

Joining Secretary Moose is also Nan Borton, Director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. We welcome all of the panelists for being here with us this morning. Thank you. Secretary Moose.

STATEMENT OF GEORGE E. MOOSE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS

Mr. MOOSE. Thank you, Madam Chair. First, let me express our appreciation to you and to the members of the subcommittee for your continuing support of our efforts to restore peace and stability and democracy in Liberia. I believe the members of the subcommit-

tee have copies of my prepared testimony which I would ask be included in the record.

By way of introduction, I think it is important to recall what's at stake for us and for West Africa in Liberia. First, I think we have a compelling humanitarian interest in ending what has become one of the world's most destructive civil wars, a conflict that has already cost an estimated 150,000 lives.

We also, I think, have an important political interest, in a country with which the United States has a unique historical relationship, in seeing Liberia become once again a responsible and a productive member of the region and of the world.

And third, I believe we also have a very strong interest in preventing this conflict from infecting the rest of the region and undermining the vigorous efforts that neighboring states have been making to put their own political and economic houses in order.

For example, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire have become among our fastest growing trade partners in Africa. Sierra Leone, as the subcommittee acknowledged at a recent meeting, has made enormous strides recently toward resolving its own internal struggles.

The concern about the potential impact of this conflict on the region also explains why the states of the subregion have invested so much of their own time, energy and resources in the search for peace in Liberia and why we have actively supported their efforts.

Needless to say, however, the events of the last 4 weeks represent a major setback to their efforts and to ours. As we meet today, it is indeed one of the bleakest moments in Liberia's recent history. Monrovia which was once a safe haven for more than a million civilians now is lying in ruins. We have knowledge of at least 80,000 Liberians who have been displaced, left homeless by the recent fighting. It is estimated that as many as 100 ECOMOG peacekeepers may have lost their lives in attempting to restore security in the city and its environs. At this point, we do not have a good fix on the number of Liberian casualties, either among the fighters or more importantly among the civilians.

As you know, Madam Chair, the United States air lifted some 2,300 people from Monrovia including 461 Americans. It is estimated that the damage inflicted on Monrovia is in the millions of dollars. The relief agencies alone have lost some \$20 million in stocks and supplies and equipment over the last 3 weeks.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. \$20 million?

Mr. MOOSE. \$20 million. That's their estimate. I want to especially commend the members of our embassy, Ambassador Milam and his staff in Monrovia, as well as our extraordinary task force from the Department of Defense for their successful efforts in carrying out a very difficult evacuation from Monrovia. During my visit there last week I had an opportunity to witness first hand the courage of the military and civilians who are trying to keep a beacon of hope burning in Monrovia.

As you mentioned, Madam Chair, I think all of us were encouraged when the Abuja accords were signed in August 1995. We believed that it held great promise. But obviously something has gone seriously wrong with that process.

In the first instance I would say that we now know that the faction leaders did not make a whole hearted commitment to the im-

plementation of the peace process, but apparently were pursuing multiple strategies, one for peace and the other for war. And while pursuing a political solution as members of the new Counsel of State in Monrovia, they also continued a very high stakes warfare in the countryside for control of, and exploitation of, Liberia's very rich resources, timber, diamonds, gold, rubber, et cetera. And in the meantime, they were hiding large caches of arms and munitions in Monrovia itself and bringing into the city large numbers of fighters.

Second, it is clear that the West African peacekeeping force, which was around 10,000 to 12,000 when it successfully defended Monrovia back in 1990 and again in 1992, has been substantially depleted and reduced to somewhere around 5,000 to 6,000 troops. Some of the unpaid ECOMOG troops we know have gone into business for themselves in Monrovia. In December, ECOMOG troops were attacked and defeated by forces of Mr. Johnson in Tubmanburg. In that battle, ECOMOG suffered heavy casualties, lost much of its heavy equipment and indeed suffered a terrible blow to its morale.

Third, another significant factor is that overall support for the peace process, including support for ECOMOG, was slow in coming and has not been at the level that we and others had hoped would be committed.

At the October 27th U.N. donors conference last fall, the United States pledged some \$75 million in support of the peace process including \$10 million for support directly to ECOMOG. Other potential donors were frankly leery of committing significant resources up front given the failure of 12 previous peace agreements. And still other donors have found it difficult to provide assistance to a non-U.N. peacekeeping operation because of their own prohibitions and restrictions.

I think the important question though is what must be done now, what can be done. Clearly, the events of this past month have been a serious setback, but we continue to believe, as do the members of ECOWAS, that the Abuja accords which provide a framework for an interim government, for disarmament, for demobilization and for the holding of free and fair elections, we are convinced that the Abuja accords remain the best framework for a permanent solution to Liberia's crisis.

On the 21st of April, we dispatched a high-level diplomatic team led by my deputy Bill Twaddell and comprised of representatives also from the National Security Council and the joint staff to work with Ambassador Milam and with ECOWAS and with the Ghanaian delegation that was representing President Rawlings to try to put the peace process back on track.

We have also initiated an international contact group on Liberia composed of countries which have a direct interest in the outcome of the peace effort in Liberia. That first meeting was held in Geneva on the 26th and I was heartened by the admittance of the 12 nations that participated in that meeting to work for the cause of peace in Liberia.

Not least, we have strongly condemned the recent fighting and the unconscionable behavior of the faction leaders. On May the 3rd, in response to the renewed fighting, we announced the reimposition

of visa restrictions barring entry into the United States of those Liberians, their families, close associates and others who obstruct the peace process. We are asking other members of the international community to implement similar travel bans. We are also prepared to consider other measures to demonstrate our intolerance of the faction leaders' obstruction of the peace process.

We have told faction leaders that we will not recognize any government coming to power by force and that we will actively work with the international community to isolate, to ostracize and to penalize, both politically and economically, any leader who comes to power by force.

I think the challenge that confronts the United States and other friends and supporters of Liberia is to give the Abuja peace process another chance to succeed. The situation in Monrovia clearly must be stabilized. The fighters must withdraw from the capital and Monrovia must once again become a safe haven. Beyond that, however, the faction leaders must resume the process of disarmament and demobilization and recommit to the political process outlined in the Abuja accords.

We will continue our vigorous support for ECOWAS's efforts to achieve a negotiated solution to the current crisis. As we speak, our special envoy for Liberia, Ambassador Dane Smith, is representing the United States at a special ECOWAS emergency meeting that is taking place in Accra. We have preliminary reports from that meeting and those reports confirm that the members of ECOWAS have recommitted to the Abuja framework as the only acceptable framework for a settlement, that they have renewed and recommitted themselves to applying even greater pressure on the factions to respect that peace process and that they have given serious consideration to what must be done to improve ECOMOG's capabilities and to make it a neutral and effective peacekeeping force.

We are also continuing to press for tougher enforcement of the 1992 U.N. arms embargo and we are asking other countries to join in that effort. And indeed we understand from the reporting from Accra that the members of ECOWAS as well have recommitted to the stronger enforcement of the arms embargo.

Finally, we have made clear that, if ECOMOG can demonstrate a renewed capacity to play a neutral and effective peacekeeping role, we are prepared to make available additional resources. Indeed, we have pledged an additional \$30 million from existing resources in equipment and other assistance. Although some ECOMOG troops clearly failed to do their duty during the recent fighting and some may have participated in the looting, it is also true that others performed commendably. And I want to note again that an estimated 100 ECOMOG soldiers may have died in the recent fighting in Liberia.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, for moral, humanitarian and political reasons, we believe we have compelling justification to remain deeply engaged even though we realize just how formidable the challenges have become. Certainly, I would agree with you. The people of Liberia have suffered too long from this tragic conflict. Liberia is also an example of the risks and the hardships faced by our own people, military and civilians, in the field, every day as they seek to advance U.S. interests and protect American citizens.

These are among the major issues also at stake in our foreign affairs budget. If we are going to continue to be a leader in world affairs, if we are going to continue to be able to deal with crises like this one in Liberia, then we need the resources that are necessary to do the job. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Secretary. We have a vote. So before Mr. Kern begins his presentation, I will recess the subcommittee and we will come back to resume with your testimony. The subcommittee is now in recess.

[Recess.]

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The subcommittee will once again resume. In the interest of time because we have votes going on and I know the Secretary has another appointment as well, Mr. Kern as I discussed with you in the break, if we could put your statement in the record, then we will proceed with the question and answer part and whatever question Secretary Moose would like for either one of you to answer, that would be fine. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kern appears in the appendix.]

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. You had mentioned, Secretary Moose, in your testimony that you visited Ghana, that you met with Jerry Rawlings to discuss how to get the peace process back on track. What were Rawlings' views on the matter? What were his recommendations concerning the roles that each one can play? And I'm looking at a wire story from today from Reuters where Jerry Rawlings says, "the ultimate option in the face of continuing meager international support and intransigence and duplicity among faction leaders is for ECOMOG to pull out from Liberia." This he said after a Liberia summit in Accra was aborted over a mass boycott. Can you share your views about what role you see him having in this?

Mr. MOOSE. First, let me perhaps try to clarify a little bit about our understanding of what is happening in Accra because the meetings are not entirely over. There was a statement issued earlier in the day by the foreign ministers and also the statement you have just alluded to by President Rawlings himself.

The meeting is of the foreign ministers of the committee of nine of ECOWAS, the group which is charged with overseeing the implementation of the Liberia peace process. The foreign ministers have been deliberating now over the last 2 days. We understand that they have done two things. No. 1, they have issued a statement which reiterates their demands for an immediate restoration of peace and a cease-fire in Monrovia. The ceasefire would include the immediate withdrawal of all of the fighters and weapons from Monrovia and a return of Monrovia to its status as a safe haven.

In addition to that, they are preparing a report which is not yet issued and not yet final. Therefore, I want to be a little circumspect here. But our envoy, Dane Smith, has been participating in those discussions and tells us that that document is a strong reaffirmation by ECOWAS of the Abuja framework, including the whole concept of disarmament, demobilization and elections.

There is a strong statement in it which rejects any government which would come to power by force in Monrovia. There is strong praise for the efforts of the international community, including the

contact group which was recently formed and met in Geneva. Reportedly, it also reaffirms the importance of the arms embargo and recommits to the concept of ECOMOG and a peacekeeping presence.

But in conjunction with that, and I think this goes to the heart of the matter, I think President Rawlings views this operation as a partnership. It's a partnership which is based on the initiative that ECOWAS has taken over the last 6 years to find a solution in Liberia. A key part of that initiative has been the peacekeeping force that they have assembled and the support for which has been borne largely by the member states of ECOWAS.

The other part of the partnership is indeed a significant contribution from the international community. And I think Rawlings regards the two parts of that as being essential to any hope of restoring the Abuja peace process and ending this conflict. I think what he has suggested here are two things. No. 1, clearly absent a commitment on the part of the faction leaders themselves to the peace process, there is little prospect or promise of a cease-fire and peace. But second, absent a continuing effort on the part of the international community, that partnership between ECOWAS and the larger international community, there is not the means and the wherewithal to assure the implementation of that peace process. So both parts of the equation are essential. And I think that is still very much where he is and indeed that is where we are.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. If I could ask you about the funds for ECOMOG, where are they coming from? Are other Africa accounts being cut to fund the ECOMOG mission in Liberia and which ones? We have been informed that perhaps Angola funds have been tapped.

Mr. MOOSE. Over the years, one of the difficulties that we have encountered, indeed the entire operation has encountered, is the difficulty of coming up with adequate funds to support, underwrite ECOMOG's efforts. Over the last 5 years, the United States has contributed something on the order of \$70 million to ECOMOG. This is over and above, of course, the roughly \$450 million that we have contributed in terms of humanitarian relief and refugee support and other activities.

At the donor's conference which took place last fall, the United States pledged \$75 million. \$10 million of that was to go to ECOMOG and indeed that money has been largely committed. But frankly, that amount in and of itself is not adequate to sustain the operations of ECOMOG. And unfortunately, other donors have been unable or for various reasons unwilling to come forward to make additional contributions.

In light of the most recent difficulties, we had pledged to make available to ECOMOG an additional \$30 million and as I mentioned earlier, that \$30 million is contingent upon a rededication of ECOMOG to do the things that are necessary to make it a neutral and effective force. Those moneys, that \$30 million, would come from existing resources. We are not asking for additional resources. It does mean indeed shifting some resources around. It does mean taking money from some accounts.

But I can tell you specifically with respect to the Angola account, we are shifting resources from one account to another, but we are

not in any way undercutting the very important investment that we have made in the peace process in Angola.

Some of the moneys that we are proposing to use are moneys from our voluntary peacekeeping account and frankly this is a painful decision for us because those are moneys that we would have preferred to use over the long term to help develop the capacity of African institutions to assume greater responsibility in peacekeeping. In a sense, we have an immediate need to assist those countries involved in the peacekeeping in Liberia. And I think therefore entirely appropriate that those funds be used for that purpose. I think Mr. Kern can perhaps address some of the proposals that we have put forward with regard to some of the accounts on the defense side.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Mr. Kern.

**STATEMENT OF VINCENT D. KERN, DEPUTY ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS**

Mr. KERN. We are looking at the possibility of a draw down of defense goods and services to include perhaps some training outside of Liberia for ECOMOG forces.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Let me ask you about Nigeria, ECOMOG, and the Clinton administration. Because the bulk of the soldiers sent to participate in this are Nigerians, how does this affect the Clinton administration's policy of strong criticism of the Nigerian Army leadership, its threat of economic and other sanctions that are still seriously being discussed, and your ability to deal with Nigeria about the peacekeepers?

Mr. KERN. Well, Madam Chair, certainly it is not in any way constrained from saying what we believe needs to be said with regard to the current situation inside Nigeria. We believe there is a serious problem with the lack of commitment to date on the part of the Nigerian authorities to a return to civilian democracy in Nigeria.

That is a problem of potentially great risk for not only Nigeria, but all of West Africa. Therefore, we feel it is important for us to continue to speak out on that issue and to continue to take actions which we believe might encourage or promote a rapid return to democracy and civilian rule in Nigeria.

At the same time, we have continued to work with the Nigerians in the context of Liberia. They are the major contributor to ECOMOG. Indeed, as we have notified the Congress, some of the assistance that we have provided to ECOMOG necessarily has also gone to support the Nigerian operations as part of ECOMOG in Liberia. This is an area where until now we have agreed in other words to compartmentalize our dialog with Nigeria, one part being with Liberia, the other part dealing with the situation in Nigeria itself.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Let me ask you about the ECOMOG peacekeeping force itself. Does the Clinton administration consider this force to be an effective, disciplined, honest military force? As you know, the press reports have not been kind. A U.N. official told the Washington Post that the ECOMOG soldiers were "not motivated, not rotated, and not paid often enough". And the New York Times has described the ECOMOG forces as "a contraband running shake down operation". Do you agree with this assessment and what

steps is the United States or other international groups taking to improve the ECOMOG forces?

Mr. MOOSE. I would say in response, Madam Chair, that certainly in its earlier days, going back to 1990-92, we saw an ECOMOG force that was certainly effective in dealing with the problem of insecurity in Liberia, that it was capable of playing an important role in the implementation of the peace process.

What we have witnessed over the last several months is an evident decline in the capacities of the organization, the discipline of that force. Part of it may well be related to the fact that some of those units have been there for a long time. Part of it does relate indeed to our understanding about the kind of support or lack of support that some of those units have gotten over the last several months.

Indeed, soldiers are not being paid. That seems also then to have contributed to this privatization of elements of ECOMOG, who have clearly engaged in economic activities beyond their scope and mandate in Liberia.

There is, I think, a connection here. We would wish to see improved performance on the part of ECOMOG. Also we have limited capacity to address some of these concerns in terms of support and payment. I think we would certainly wish to see reversal of the trend that we have seen now. Our pledge or promise of additional support, for ECOMOG is quite clearly contingent on a clear demonstration of improvement in ECOMOG as an organization and in discipline and performance.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Maybe, Mr. Kern, could address that question as well.

Mr. KERN. Well, yes, as Assistant Secretary Moose said in the early days of ECOMOG they were an efficient and largely neutral force. They came in 1990. They forced Charles Taylor's forces off the Monrovia peninsula. And then again in 1992 with the help of a large part, the help of a Senegalese contingent that was there, they stopped Charles Taylor from seizing the capital. But over the years as Assistant Secretary Moose has said, the force has grown smaller. They are not, from what we can tell, adequately supplied by their home countries and some of them have gone off the straight and narrow, not things that we would expect of our soldiers or of any professional soldier.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. One last question. The spillover effect to neighboring countries, Sierra Leone and others, what is your assessment of the possibilities of problems there?

Mr. MOOSE. I think there are already problems. As you know, there are already some 750,000 refugees from Liberia outside of the country, mainly in Guinea and Sierre Leone and a substantial number now in Cote d'Ivoire. Those refugees, of course, carry with them the same political affiliations and passions that prompted them to leave Liberia in the first place. We know that the authorities in those neighboring countries are becoming increasingly concerned by that politicization. I was recently in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire and I know that the officials there have proposed a whole range of measures to try to respond to the increasing security generated by the presence of these refugees and the activities of the Liberian factions across the frontier. Increasingly, this is a problem

that poses security risks for those neighboring states. Sierra Leone, because it is perhaps the weakest and most vulnerable of the neighbors is the one that has voiced the greatest concern about this including the meeting in Accra.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. Mr. Johnston.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you very much. To follow up on one question that the Chair had, Ambassador. Incidentally, your remarks on PBS on Monday night were excellent on this same subject matter.

Two years ago, there was allocated to peacekeeping in Liberia \$40 million, which was siphoned off to Haiti, you will recall. You do not recall. Has it been restored? There is a lot of shaking in the first row.

Mr. MOOSE. If I recall correctly, and I would appreciate an opportunity to go back and look at this one. There were moneys set aside in the funding for the 1995 voluntary peacekeeping account that we had hoped would be used to not so much for Liberia per se, but for our long-term regional efforts to try to build capacity of African peacekeepers, the OAU and individual countries to respond to crises in Africa. All but \$650,000 of this \$10 million was used for the immediate requirement of Haiti.

I think what this points to is a continuing problem that we have; we desperately need to find ways to deal with conflict situations to contain them, to end them, to resolve them and indeed, where possible, to prevent them. All of those efforts nevertheless do require resources. They require an investment in terms of peace monitoring, sometimes in peacekeeping, and in support for peace initiatives such as the one in which President Nyerere is now engaged in, in Burundi.

Finding the resources to do that has been extremely difficult in the constrained budget environment that we have now. One of the things that is critically important to us as we look forward to the current Fiscal Year 1997 budget, is to ensure that out of that process comes at least minimal resources to enable us to continue our efforts with respect to conflict prevention and conflict resolution. Absent that, we will face, I am afraid, other situations like Liberia where we do not have the ability or the capacity to respond to intervene as peacemakers or peacekeepers. And the consequence will be that Nan Borton's shop in OFDA will have to shoulder an even greater burden of responsibility for the consequences of unresolved conflict.

Mr. JOHNSTON. You state that there have been 100 ECOMOG deaths. Are they mainly Nigerian?

Mr. MOOSE. I will have to say honestly and candidly, we do not know the exact composition of those and I would also say that the figure is not one that we have verified for ourselves.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Mr. Kern, in your testimony you mentioned three minor casualties to Marines, all of whom have been returned to duty. Any deaths at all?

Mr. KERN. No. Not of our Marines. They did return fire and kill five of the people who were attacking.

Mr. JOHNSTON. I might point out that in watching these newspaper photographs, it looks like the average age of the Liberian troops is 14 years old. And I do not mean that facetiously.

Mr. KERN. No, no.

Mr. JOHNSTON. It is really very sad.

Mr. KERN. You are right.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Let me go through some mathematics, Mr. Kern, to make a point here. We sent in 4,000 troops into Rwanda at Goma. Were any of them killed?

Mr. KERN. No.

Mr. JOHNSTON. And we saved thousands of people from dying of cholera, right?

Mr. KERN. Yes, we did.

Mr. JOHNSTON. We sent in troops into Haiti. Do you know how many troops suffered casualties in Haiti?

Mr. KERN. I do not really know, but I know it was a low number and—

Mr. JOHNSTON. Well, I know of one suicide.

Mr. KERN. I think there were two suicides.

Mr. JOHNSTON. In Bosnia so far we have lost one serviceman to disarming a mine and one in an accident. Do you know of any others?

Mr. KERN. Not that I am aware of.

Mr. JOHNSTON. And Liberia is zero. So we have a combination of troops in the four different locations and four deaths. Do you know how many troops die in the United States each year from accidents or injuries?

Mr. KERN. I know it is substantially higher than we would have had with that contingent of forces; that more of them would have in all probability been killed had they remained in the United States or Germany or wherever else they were stationed.

Mr. JOHNSTON. God, I love that answer because you make my point that probably the safest place for an American, particularly a ranger who has volunteered twice, first to get in the Army and then to get into combat, the safest place for him or her to be is in one of these peacekeeping assignments. And we are so reluctant to move any troops there. And I think we are defaulting in our moral obligation. You did not know I was going to be sworn in, did you Madam Chair? Last question, Mr. Moose. Is there any hope for this country?

Mr. MOOSE. I think that in all candor, yes, there is. This is not—I was going to say it is not Somalia, but you know what I mean.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Monrovia is getting very close to Mogadishu infrastructure-wise.

Mr. MOOSE. If something is not done quickly to arrest it, yes. But we are not talking about the same kind of intractable situation that we encountered in Somalia.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Is there an independent judiciary in this country?

Mr. MOOSE. Not yet. One of the problems this process will address is an attempted reconstruction of the judiciary to try to reconstruct one. That is one of the objectives of the peace process itself. But I think the point is this. This is a problem with which with the will and commitment of the neighboring states and with the support of the international community, I am convinced, can be resolved at relatively modest costs, certainly modest compared to the investment we have already made in humanitarian relief in response. And modest in terms of what it protects in terms of our in-

vestment and the potential for the neighboring states. Again, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire are among our fastest growing trading partners. But their efforts to improve their economic performance and their growth are all being threatened by the continuation of this war. If it is not arrested, then I would argue that all of us will pay in some way or another, directly or indirectly, a substantially higher price down the road.

Mr. JOHNSTON. When Mr. Payne and Mr. Hastings and I were in Cote d'Ivoire, they know how to package guilt and pointed out that Liberia is our only colony and it is destabilizing the entire area there. They felt we had not done enough.

Mr. MOOSE. I think what we have seen and understand by the deliberations in Accra this week underscores, there is a recognition this problem is solvable, but it is too big for any one nation to solve. It has to be a collective effort. There has got to be a partnership between the international community broadly speaking, the United States being a major leader of that effort. And the neighboring states. And I think that is the framework within which we can actually achieve an outcome.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. Congressman Houghton.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Thank you, very much. Mr. Secretary, maybe I could sort of review the bidding a little bit. We thought we had a stabilized situation in Liberia. We did not. The thing has drastically disintegrated. We are showing intolerance. We are getting diplomatic teams together. We have condemned what they are doing. We are thinking about penalizing. But I do not really see what we are doing. Is it because of lack of money? Is it because of lack of unified nation action? What should we be doing and what is our leverage specifically right now?

Mr. MOOSE. I think there are several things that come together. Part of it is indeed a commitment and the commitment has to come from several different places. The first commitment obviously must come from the Liberians themselves. And here I would make, I think, an important distinction. We know that the people of Liberia are indeed seriously committed to peace. What we need is to see a comparable commitment from the faction leaders to the accords that they have already signed. There needs obviously to be a commitment from the neighboring states.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Could we just hold on that a minute? We need to have a commitment from the faction leaders. But what should we do to make that happen? I mean, what's our leverage? How do we make that happen?

Mr. MOOSE. I think we have leverage, both positive and negative. I think these leaders are not invulnerable, not out of reach of international sanctions, pressures, influences of various kinds. That effort if it's to be effective clearly has to be a joint effort and not just the United States with our actions, but also with ECOWAS.

And again, I would argue there is renewed commitment to do that. That is on the negative side. On the positive side, our leverage is our ability to organize with others the support necessary, one for the peace process and second for the rebuilding of Liberia. Liberia is meaningless even to the faction leaders absent some restoration of viability.

I would liken this to the situations we have seen elsewhere. The situation in Mozambique required a partnership. It required a combination of efforts. Certainly it required a commitment from the key protagonists in the war, Frelimo and Renamo. But absent that international support structure, that commitment would have been meaningless. There needed to be an honest broker. There needed to be some force presence that would instill the confidence necessary to implement that peace process. The same is true in Angola. The same can be true in Liberia if we can achieve that same combination of commitment and will on the one part and the resources necessary on the other hand to ensure the support for the implementation of the peace process.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Could I just interrupt again? I am a faction leader and you come and say that to me. Why do I listen to you? What is the incentive? What is the end of the road for me if I do not do what you want?

Mr. MOOSE. Well, No. 1 is a Liberia that is in ruins. If you do not go along it therefore serves nobody's purpose, not even yours as a faction leader. The second, on the negative side, is that I think the international community would make life extremely uncomfortable for a faction leader who resists the will of the people of Liberia when the international community pushed for a peaceful settlement.

Mr. JOHNSTON. So they stop the importation of arms. What else do they do? How do they affect me? How does it get to me so that I have to do something for the benefit of the people?

Mr. MOOSE. I think there's a combination of economic pressures that can be brought to bear. I think that people will not be comfortable in a situation where they feel they cannot travel freely outside of Liberia anymore and that's coming very close to that; also I think there are other sanctions that might be brought to bear.

I think there are some who are prepared to start thinking of the actions in Liberia in terms of war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law. There are a number of sanctions which I believe could be effectively applied here which would make a difference if indeed there is continued obstruction on the part of the faction leaders.

On the positive side again, there is a commitment on the part of the international community, as demonstrated during the donor's conference last fall, to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Liberia. But that can only happen in the context of a peace settlement.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. Congressman Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. Thank you, gentlemen. I am sorry I missed your testimony. But I wonder. There is supposed to be a U.S. arms embargo and economic sanctions on Liberia that were put in 1992. We have reports though that Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Fasso are not adhering to those embargoes. Do we have any fact that Burkina Fasso and Cote d'Ivoire are still cooperating with allowing arms to flow through? It has been alleged that Charles Taylor has connections in Burkina Fasso and came out through Libya and down through Cote d'Ivoire to start the incursion. What are we doing with the neighbors?

Mr. MOOSE. I think it is fair to say that until recently a number of the neighboring states have not done all that they could or should to make the arms embargo effective. Part of the problem has been that given the fluidity of the situation in that region, there are so many potential sources and means of getting weapons into the country that people did not feel it was worth their while or their effort to enforce that embargo.

It is not easy to control the borders. It is not easy to deal with the possibility that some of your own officials may have been co-opted by the war lords on the one hand or the arms marketers on the other.

What I do sense, and I sensed it very strongly when I was in Abidjan last week in Accra, is that there is now compelling recognition that failure to deal with the flow of arms into Liberia is going to have a serious impact on the security of the neighboring countries as well. It already is having a serious impact. Cote d'Ivoire already has a serious crime problem. And indeed I will tell you that while I was there, a Cabinet minister had his house broken into even as we were sitting and talking in the living room of our ambassador.

There is a serious problem there. And part of that problem is fueled by the flow of arms from, through and around Liberia. And that recognition is forcing action by the neighboring states to control this flow of arms. The discussions in Accra that have been taking place over the last 2 days have focused very much on this issue. And again, the final report is not out, but I believe that when that report does come out, there will be some fairly pointed actions with respect to the arms embargo.

Mr. PAYNE. Also a year or so ago, it was alleged that some French businessmen were dealing with Taylor with timber and different kinds of things, supplying them with cash to continue insurrection. Has that been raised as you meet with your European colleagues? Is that ending? Has that stopped?

Mr. MOOSE. Without again getting into the nationalities of some of the people who have been involved, it is clear that there is a trade going on, a trafficking going on in Liberia's resources. Whether it is diamonds or rubber or timber, that that trade is providing the faction leaders with the wherewithal to purchase arms and to continue their fighting.

Once again, I would say that up until now people in the region and elsewhere have taken only halfhearted efforts to deal with that. But again, there is increasing recognition, I believe, that unless this part of the situation is dealt with, then the fighting will continue, escalate, spread and infect the entire subregion. Again, the discussions as we understand are taking place in Accra now, include what can be done to more effectively enforce the restrictions on the trafficking in Liberian products and the impact that that will have on the capabilities of the factions and the faction leaders.

Mr. PAYNE. Finally, I just want to say that when this whole thing began we met with the Bush administration people saying that if we went in (the Marines were in Buchanan at the time that was held up in that building over the bridge), if we had gone in actually and simply removed Doe from Liberia at the time, the

same way that Mengistu was ushered out of Ethiopia and the war ended the way that the Shah was taken out of Iran years ago, the way that Marcos left the Philippines, if Doe could have been removed, then the fighting could have ended.

But at that time Secretary Cohen, Brent Scowcroft, we met in the situation room and they said that we were not going to get involved. It is a new era. It is the West African sphere of influence. Nigeria's the dominant place and therefore we are advocating our responsibilities to ECOWAS and ECOMOG forces which I personally felt was unfair because when things got serious in Central Africa Republic or Rwanda, the French decided at some point they had to intercede.

I think that we should have removed Doe from the scene at that time 4 or 5 years ago and perhaps the situation would have been 100 percent different. The fact is that we did not and that we left it up to ECOMOG forces which really took sides, to be truthful. They were almost friendly in my opinion with Doe prior to the insurgence. And so it all started on rocky grounds.

I think that the way that we are allowing the ECOMOG forces to deteriorate by not having their financial resources necessary, the demoralization of them, the criminality that some of them have turned to, that there really has to be a rethinking of who needs to go in.

I think that at this point it is a U.N. situation. I think that the United States should take the lead in the security council to bring this Liberian question to the attention of the full United Nations.

I think that we ought to look seriously at having peacekeeping troops move into Liberia and that ECOMOG experience be terminated. We could transfer funds that we were going to make available to ECOMOG, available to the United Nations as a portion of our peacekeeping. It cannot continue to deteriorate the way it is going. I do not see how we can repair the ECOMOG forces at this time.

I think the United States has a responsibility. It is a colony whether you want to call it that or not. They have a Constitution. They have a flag. Everybody that ran the country came from America and we cannot say that we should treat it like any other country in Africa. If there is one place that we should have a responsibility, it is Liberia.

And I would just suggest that we should have a more aggressive position by the United Nations and by our representatives at the United Nations and that we ought to also let it be known that those people who are committing crimes will have to go before an international court of justice.

That those people who are committing crimes, who continually allow children to kill and they leave their factions in Liberia, that there will be trials held after this is over and that they would have to stand accountable for the destruction and the death that is being wrecked on the people of Liberia and the children and the women. And that if they know that, then that may change their behavior.

But I think this has just gone along too far when you get down to children being the fighters, it has gone too far. It has to stop.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Congressman Payne. Congressman Chabot.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. Secretary Moose, just one question. ECOMOG lack of success notwithstanding, what if any hope is there that stable countries, democratic countries in Africa, if there are certainly not Somalia Rwanda or Burundi or Sudan or Libya or Nigeria or some others, what possibility is there or should we be optimistic that other countries could dedicate troops that really will be successful in bringing about peace or maintaining peace or preventing these types of tragedies from happening in the future? Should we be involved? Are you optimistic, pessimistic or what? Frustrated I assume.

Mr. MOOSE. A bit of all of those, Mr. Congressman. I do think, No. 1, we are obliged to continue to make an effort to try to resolve this problem. And I think the alternatives are not very attractive because they imply a collapse, an implosion and all the chaos that goes with that. Or, one can look at other options for international response which I think at the moment are not terribly attractive either.

Second, I do think that we have seen repeatedly over the last several years a willingness on the part of African nations to contribute toward the solution of the problem in Liberia; that included a willingness on the part of Tanzania and Uganda a year and a half ago to provide troops. There were stated commitments by or willingness on the part of other African nations to provide troops.

I think one of the constraints on the ability to attract other African peacekeepers to make a contribution in Liberia is the unreliability of support for their efforts. They realistically feel they need a solid assured reliable commitment of financial and materiel backing for them to be able to participate in the peacekeeping operation.

I think that is one of the issues at which we are going to be obliged to look. That was raised when we had our meeting of the international contact group on Liberia—ways in which we can ensure support for ECOMOG. And I think we all agree that we are looking at both an expansion and at a different configuration of countries participating in ECOMOG. But again to achieve that, we need to be able to assure that the funding and support is going to be on a reliable and sustainable basis.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Congressman. Congressman Frazer.

Mr. FRAZER. Thank you, Madam Chairlady. Ambassador Moose, is there some understanding in the international community in general and in particular in the continent of Africa that the United States is responsible for what is happening in Liberia?

Mr. MOOSE. I certainly don't find that. All of our conversations again revolve around the notion that this is a problem in which many countries have a stake. It is a complex problem which requires a collective effort. It is not unlike other international problems that we encounter around the world which require international collective effort. The issue therefore is how do we work out mechanisms for sharing that burden and that responsibility.

Mr. FRAZER. But are we responsible for bringing about peace in Liberia, the United States?

Mr. MOOSE. I think we have a responsibility to make a significant effort to help establish peace in Liberia.

Mr. FRAZER. Looking at the experience we have had in Somalia and Beirut and looking at Mr. Kern's statement, the United States has no intention of using our troops to stabilize the city or to perform what are military functions off the U.S. embassy compound. Do you agree with this policy?

Mr. MOOSE. It is indeed the policy of the Administration and I do agree with it.

Mr. FRAZER. In your opinion, the African countries, neighboring countries, and other members of the United Nations, are they doing enough?

Mr. MOOSE. I guess, Congressman Frazer, I would say in response to that, that there is much more that all of us can do and can and should be doing if indeed we are serious about trying to resolve this problem.

Mr. FRAZER. You said if ECOMOG can demonstrate a renewed capacity to play a neutral peacekeeping role, we would be prepared to make available approximately \$30 million from existing resources in equipment and other additional assistance. Tell me of the countries that are prepared to match this \$30 million that we are prepared to make available?

Mr. MOOSE. As of this moment, I cannot point to any other country that is prepared to make that kind of commitment. However, one of the encouraging things that came out of our meeting in Geneva with the international contact group was certainly a clearly-stated readiness on the part of other countries to contribute toward a reconstitution, a rebuilding of ECOMOG.

Mr. FRAZER. Mr. Payne just said that Liberia is a colony of the United States. I disassociate myself with that pronouncement because I do not think that it is. But I think that, and I would just like to put it in the form of a question, you find an overriding expectation that the United States should bring about peace in Liberia.

Mr. MOOSE. Again, Congressman Frazer, I certainly have had many opportunities over the last 3 years to engage with our friends in Africa and in Europe on this issue. There certainly is an expectation that the United States will be involved in a significant major way in the search for a solution of Liberia.

But there is also a recognition that this is a big problem, big financially, big in terms of complexity, big in terms of what is required. And because it is such, a recognition that there are contributions that need to be made not only by the United States but by others as well.

Again, I would say that acknowledgement is reflected in the discussions which members of ECOWAS have had. They have at no point suggested that this is a problem that they are going to back away from and hope that somebody else is going to solve.

What they have asked of us and of others is to find a way to responsibly share the burden, the financial cost and the materiel and other requirements for making this operation work.

Mr. FRAZER. I am not suggesting that we run away from our sense of responsibility, but how do we convince the American people in light of Somalia, Beirut and other experiences? That shrink-

ing dollar, everybody is concerned about rising taxes. How do we convince the American people that we should play the world police when the experience has been that when we have tried to behave like the world police we have been castigated as trying to run the world? Is it right that we should take that role continuously?

Mr. MOOSE. That is a much broader question, Congressman. I would argue that, No. 1, there have been a number of highly successful examples of United States and international involvement in trying to solve problems in Africa and elsewhere. And among the more recent ones I would cite, are the operation experiences in Mozambique and Angola, the efforts in Haiti, and though they are still incomplete, the efforts in Bosnia.

I spent a fair amount of time out talking with Americans as well. And I get a sense that Americans would support the United States in its efforts to try to bring peace and end suffering around the world if we can demonstrate that there is an effective plan for doing that. I think we can devise an effective plan for doing that in Liberia. And I think if we present that, we have some reasonable chance of getting support for it.

Mr. FRAZER. I suspect that the American people will in fact support what you have said until such time as they are asked to pay more taxes or to count bodies coming back home. Are we responsible for Liberia in the sense that we are not holding the French responsible for Zaire?

Mr. MOOSE. Perhaps I could come at it in a slightly different way. Certainly the mail that we have been getting in my office consistently and overwhelmingly is not that we should withdraw, disengage, leave this problem to somebody else. It is that we should be looking as hard as we can for ways to end the suffering and end the crisis.

My experience is typically that that is what Americans would willingly support. And I do not even think it is a question of asking them to pay more money. I think it is a question of how we invest in ways to prevent suffering and crisis and greater cost by investing in these kinds of peacemaking and peacekeeping activities. I think if it is presented in that way, there are many in this country who would support that kind of an approach.

Mr. FRAZER. I agree with our efforts. I just do not want to leave with the understanding or the impression that what has happened in Liberia is an American problem because it is not. It is a Liberian problem.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Frazer. Congressman Hastings.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I was just kind of taken aback by my colleague for whom I have great respect and I agree with him that it is a Liberian problem. But I would only remind him that in 1847 American slaves who became free persons had an awful lot to do with the establishment of Liberia.

And if this nexus that we continue to espouse, particularly as African Americans, if there was ever a case for us to be heard, it is now. And I find the silence almost deafening from some of the African American communities that are quick to establish the nexus with the mother country.

I do agree that for humanitarian reasons and for political reasons, it is in the interest of the United States to try and ensure stability, not only in Liberia and on the continent of Africa but as the last remaining super power elsewhere in the world.

Towards that end, Mr. Moose, let me thank you again for the extraordinary work that you and others do on behalf of all of us in areas that so few of us have a good understanding of. I know that we will hear from Mr. Kern and we will hear from persons who have direct understanding with reference to Liberia.

Immediate concern that I wish to share with you even though I was unable to hear your testimony because of my tardiness, I read your testimony since I am here. And I do note that you note how slow international donors and the United States have been in supporting ECOWAS and ECOMOG at their request.

Chairman Payne, Harry Johnston and I a little more than a year ago sat in Ghana at 2 o'clock in the morning Ghanaian time and listened to President Rawlings and others ask us for, and you correct me if I am wrong, three helicopters and ten buses. To my knowledge, none of that was forthcoming from the time that we were there until such time as the United States forces had to enter for purposes of securing the U.S. embassy.

I dare say in the short time that we are there and even since your return now that we are there protecting our folk who have fled to our embassy and protecting our interest there, rightly so, I bet you we have spent more money than it would have cost us to supply three helicopters and ten buses.

And I do not think he was seeking as much materiel as he was a show of support so that he would have something to discuss with other African countries as to our commitment. Secretary Moose, is there any possibility aside from what is going on in Accra that we can do a Dayton-type conference? We seem to be able to do these things when we want to. Bosnia certainly is and was in just as bad shape as Liberia is today. And we were able to draw the forces surrounding the area.

In this instance I am talking specifically Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, other countries of interest into the United States away from the hostile forces and maybe even Taylor, Johnson, their representatives or others, and bring them to some accord, maybe a thirteenth, now that they might feel better about the world and in that become the leaders in asking the French, the Belgians, the English and any others to participate. Is that possibility out there? Let me strike the word possibility.

Is there that kind of thinking going on about trying to get them from the immediate surroundings and way, way away a la the Dayton accord to try and reach some kind of agreement that might stick or at least might stabilize the matter now and not cost us so much in humanitarian relief and DOD relief that we are presently providing?

Mr. MOOSE. Thank you, Congressman Hastings. In response to your specific question, let me address the helicopters if I might; it is an important issue and it is one to which we have been responsive. We too received similar requests from President Rawlings. We were there about the same time as your delegation was, as a matter of fact.

And we looked at the question of how we might respond to that directly by providing helicopters. And we frankly looked at it as it was going to be more costly and less effective to provide those helicopters directly than to provide them in another means. We have solved that problem by committing part of the \$10 million for ECOMOG support last fall to lease helicopters for ECOMOG's use.

Two of those helicopters are still running. One of them was damaged in the fighting recently. But they continue to support ECOMOG's operations.

Part of that money also was used to lease trucks and other equipment that would enable ECOMOG to deploy its forces outside of Monrovia. So in a practical way I think we have been responsive to the need to give ECOMOG some greater capacity to respond to its mandate.

On the question of what's the best way to get the kind of commitment that we need from the faction leaders in the first instance, but also from others to the implementation of peace, I will say candidly at this point that I don't know of any thinking that is being given to the kind of large-scale international conference on the order of the Dayton negotiation.

On the other hand, I recognize our colleagues in ECOWAS feel a certain ownership for this process. They are the ones who took it on. They are the ones who organized a force to go to Liberia. They are the ones who have spearheaded the diplomatic effort.

And frankly, you know, notwithstanding the immense difficulties of this operation, they deserve support and commendation for what they have done. And I would hate somehow in all of this to take away that ownership because there is something important I think in what is happening here.

We have been arguing for some time that Africans and others elsewhere ought to assume more responsibility for dealing with the problems in their own neighborhoods. Here is an example of a group of countries which has been serious about trying to do that.

And so what I would much prefer to do, frankly, is to find more effective ways of supporting them in that endeavor and I think we can. I think we need to look again at how we can make their efforts more successful.

Mr. HASTINGS. Well, I want to make it very clear that I am supportive of the Administration's efforts wholeheartedly. I just do not think they go far enough. And that is not meant as criticism. And I recognize that a lot has to be taken into consideration before we take additional steps.

If I had my druthers, we would intervene directly and we would remove all of the faction leaders and have it clearly understood that they are not going to control that country. But, of course, then I am dreaming and I recognize that that is not going to take place. But it does not mean that it should not and it does not mean that somebody ought not say it because enough already of people putting us in the position of having to provide more humanitarian relief than we would in peacekeeping efforts if we were to really put forth the necessary efforts to keep the peace and I thank you Madam Chairwoman.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Congressman Hastings. Gentlemen, just one last question about the U.N. arms embargo.

Since ending the arms flow into Liberia remains crucial to halting the current fighting, which countries are the ones that are violating the U.N. arms embargo and what can the United States do and other countries to insist that the arms embargo be of aid?

Mr. MOOSE. Madam Chair, I do not really have information that I think I can share with you in this forum on what we know. And I would also argue that our knowledge here is not complete. What I would say as I indicated earlier I think it is clear that there has been less than a wholehearted effort on the part of many of the states and subregions to do what is necessary to make that embargo effective.

I do think that there is more that can be done using the mechanism of the U.N. arms embargo committee to make it more effective and that is one of the things we are looking at as well. But I also will repeat what I said earlier in that I do think that there is growing recognition on the part of the neighboring states that this has become a problem, a beast, that is now about to devour them as well and that they know that they need to take it seriously.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Congressman Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Yes, I just wanted to, perhaps I used the term "a colony" loosely, but I just want to as my colleague disassociate himself from my remarks, just for the record wanted to note that the United States paid for 16,400 freed American ex-slaves to go to the so-called grain coast of Liberia to start a country. Now, when Britain sent people over to the 13 original colonies, they paid their way and they started the 13 original colonies. The 16,400 people, the only difference was the ones that the English sent over were white. These were black. So they were still, in my opinion, colonists. They started the country in 1847. President Monroe, they named a major city after him. They took the U.S. Constitution. They took the colors of the flag. And if there is any close—and maybe the term colony is used and I do not mean that as any offense to Liberians. There is a responsibility. There is a direct responsibility. Even freed slaves that were on their way here that the British Government had in their possession were allowed by the U.S. Government to go into Liberia as a contribution and we have continually supported the country. As a matter of fact, Liberia joined World War I and World War II because of the close alliance with the United States of America, one of the first African countries to join those wars.

So perhaps the word colony was too strong and I apologize to my colleague if that was offensive. The umbilical cord is there. We are connected. And I stand on the remarks that I made other than perhaps I should soften the term colony if that is offensive. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much.

Mr. KERN. Madam Chair, can I just add one comment?

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Yes, Mr. Kern.

Mr. KERN. I am sorry that Congressman Johnson has left, but I would not like to leave the impression that what our Marines are doing in Liberia is risk-free. We did have only slight casualties, but one of the slight casualties was the creasing of the side of the throat by a bullet. Had that bullet been an inch or two to one side, we might have lost one of our Marines.

And while we have had good success in operations such as in Liberia, this time and previous times, which were meant to defend and protect our diplomatic community and in Rwanda which was not a peacekeeping operation but a humanitarian operation, we have been far less successful, as we all know, in Somalia.

And so there is a distinction between putting U.S. forces on the ground in Africa for humanitarian purposes or for protection of American citizens and for getting engaged in peacekeeping or peacemaking.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, gentlemen. We look forward to working with you on an informal basis as well as your briefing the subcommittee on the latest developments. Thank you for being with us.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Moose appears in the appendix.]

For our second panel, we have Lady Johnnet Bush of the Liberian Community Association of Rhode Island. Before I introduce her, I understand from several sources that the Liberian community in the State of Rhode Island is the largest in the United States. Thus, while no group is homogeneous in their views, Lady Bush will be able to give us a representative assessment of the opinions of the Liberian community in the United States.

Lady Bush, if you could join us, is a native of the Gibi Territory which is now Margibi County. She came to the United States in 1975, returning occasionally to Liberia. She is currently an immunization outreach crisis intervention and social worker in the State of Rhode Island and serves on various boards and committees including the NAACP and the Rhode Island coalition for immigrants and refugees.

We thank Lady Bush for joining us on such short notice and extend our appreciation to our colleague from Rhode Island, Congressman Patrick Kennedy, for recommending Lady Bush to us. Thank you, Lady Bush. If you could limit your statement to 5 minutes, please.

STATEMENT OF LADY JOHNNET BUSH, LIBERIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF RHODE ISLAND

Ms. BUSH. Thank you for allowing me to be here. First of all, I will go to page two of my statement you already have.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And we will add it completely in the record, Lady Bush.

Ms. BUSH. OK. And what I said was that I want to thank you all. I am not going to go through it. I am going to be talking from a mother's point of view, from a woman, talking to fathers, brothers, aunties, uncles. The Liberian children is what touched my heart. They are just nothing but toy soldiers. You have children who have been drugged. Where human blood, drugs, gun powder, the guns are bigger than themselves. They are the ones that are killing indiscriminately.

The children are the future of Liberia, fellow Americans. From what I see, if the war is not stopped now, Liberia has no future. Our future leaders are nothing but druggists.

So the children are starving. They are eating human beings. They and the dogs are fighting over the corpses in the street. They

are taking their limbs and eating them. They are dying from the epidemics such as cholera, yellow fever.

So we look up to America. I am not going to reiterate what has been said. Everyone on the panel knows the ties that Liberia and America have. But as a Liberian, I am here to appeal to the United States, to the international government, to please put a stop to the war. The women are being murdered, slaughtered.

In Liberia the rebels are splitting women's stomachs open. Taking us to be guinea pigs. If they see a pregnant woman, they say I bet that woman has a boy. Another one says I bet it is a girl. And they split her open with no anesthesia. Can you imagine the pain as a woman that gave births to kids? Fathers, your daughters?

Please. We are appealing to all of you. We know the war is in our hands, but we cannot do. Our hands are tied. We look up to you. A nation like America can stop the war. I know everyone is saying it is up to us, but if it was up to us alone, the war would have stopped.

So as fathers, mothers, in this hall here tonight, we ask that Liberians, I do not want to get emotional because you have people dying, dying because of no medicine. You have the elderly, the women being raped, the men being castrated. The injustice to human beings in Liberia is beyond words.

I as a Liberian or born Liberian will remain a Liberian as long as I live from my heart. I am asking you all to please put an end to the war. You can stop the war. We ask also that we have always depended upon the help. We have always considered ourselves a protectorate of the United States. We need you more than ever to bring this war to an end.

We therefore appeal to you to:

- (1) intervene directly to bring the war to an end;
- (2) to encourage the formation of a new interim government, not including the war lords and individuals who have used a gun to inflict serious casualty upon innocent civilians;
- (3) use your economic, diplomatic, military leverages to encourage the warring factions to call for and honor a true cease-fire and disarmament;
- (4) convene a meeting of the war lords to work out modalities for the enforcement of cease-fire as in the case of Bosnia;
- (5) help plan, monitor, enforce the disarmament process;
- (6) impose an embargo on the shipment of arms to any warring factions;
- (7) continue to provide humanitarian assistance, including medical services, food and water to the suffering population;
- (8) freeze all assets of war lords, their family members and representatives;
- (9) deny all warlords, their family members and representatives visas to travel to the United States;
- (10) grant general amnesty to all Liberians currently in the United States; and
- (11) help repatriate other displaced Liberians, plan and monitor free and fair elections and jumpstart the Liberian economy.

We call on the United States, a country of good will, that has practically resolved all conflicts in modern times to do the same for Liberia. We are pleading.

I will end with a famous quotation. May God grant us the seniority to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we cannot and the wisdom to know the difference. I thank you all.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Lady Bush. If you could tell us approximately how many Liberians live in the United States, where they are primarily concentrated, and how there came to be so many in the State of Rhode Island.

Ms. BUSH. I will only give you a guesstimation. I do not want to tie my neck to it. But approximately we think we are about 50,000. Maybe give or take plus, you know, statistically. But according to statistics, we are told Rhode Island holds the largest amount of Liberians.

Rhode Island is a small state, yes. It reminds us of Liberia. You can get around freely. And every Liberian that is in America has some relatives in Rhode Island. The elderly particularly like Rhode Island because it is not chaotic. They do not have to live in the 15th floor and look through the window. They can come downstairs and walk from neighbor to neighbor. And this is how we have been lucky to have a lot of Liberians there.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Charles Taylor used to live in New England. Have you or anyone in your organization met with him and have an opinion, an assessment, of his personal motivation in this problem?

Ms. BUSH. I would like to get this straight. The Rhode Island Community of Association of Rhode Island or the Liberian Community Association has no political ties with any warring faction. It is true that he lived in New England, but it is up to individuals to have their own rights to who they affiliate with. But the organization and me personally have no political tie with any warring faction.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. And your call for a general amnesty for the United States to grant to any Liberian currently in the United States, why do you believe this general amnesty is needed?

Ms. BUSH. Well, as you will note, when the war started in 1991, the first TPS, which is Temporary Protective Status, was granted to the Liberians that are here that could not return to Liberia because of the crisis in Liberia. But a cutoff date was March 27, 1992. And since that time, people have been coming because of the same situation, fleeing, coming to America as a safe haven.

But when they came, their TPS or Temporary Protective Status, they were not eligible for it. And fellow committee members it is very strenuous to be in a foreign land when you cannot work. You might as well be, you might as well suffer.

So we ask with TPS at least they can be granted a work permit to be able to even do janitorial work, something to put food to their mouth. Liberians are poor and proud. There is nothing we feel we cannot do if it means to even sweep the floors. But in this country you have to have work permits and an SS number. And without that, they cannot work. And they are going to be less productive because we who have families in all these refugee camps and those are here are depending on us, it is very strenuous. And so if we can have these people, the ones that came after the cutoff date, not just a handful. That's all we are asking.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Congressman Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you, very much. I have been taking some notes on that and I would like if you would be in touch with my office and we can work with the chairperson of the committee. But we could take the lead in asking for a meeting, perhaps even with the Congressional Black Caucus to—

Ms. BUSH. Good.

Mr. PAYNE [continuing]. ask the immigration people to take a look at the temporary protective status.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. We would be more than happy to help, Congressman. Let us know.

Mr. PAYNE. That would be great. We could work in conjunction. I am very glad that you brought that up. And I think that a number of your ten points, the points that you raise in your statement, are very important points and we will certainly study all of them. But there is certainly compassion for what's going on. It should end. I mean, there is no question about it. But by the same token we need to also be able to assist those who are here or ready and also to attempt as I was able to get back around 1992, 1993, to have Liberians in refugee camps that had families in the United States to be able to use the U.S. embassy in Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea and Sierre Leone to process their papers to come here. Normally, they would have to be Liberians out of Liberia, but we were able to relax it temporarily and that is another issue that we could revisit.

Ms. BUSH. Yes.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. Congressman Houghton.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Lady Bush, two questions. What is the single most important of all the eleven points that you are making? And second, why would denying warlords traveling in the United States and freezing the assets of the warlords in the United States have any impact?

Ms. BUSH. These warlords, they are fighting their family here. They are being protected. Their families are not the ones that are being killed. Their children are not the toy soldiers. Their relatives, their representatives, children are not the toy soldiers. The children are not the ones that are drinking human blood. Their children or their relatives and family's children are not the ones that are being fed with gunpowder. They are here in a safe haven having the best of food, going to school.

Our children back there are deprived of school. Nowadays, you know education is a very important thing. And for a developing country, we need some educated people. And if these kids do not go to school, we might as well stay back in the rock ages.

And the most important thing here is to have the war come to an end. We might say what can we do? We have given you our ten points or our statement. In conjunction with that, we will ask even though it has been said repeatedly that you cannot send military power over there. But if you could send some of your high-ranking generals to be there for stability and maintenance of peace, God knows maybe that could bring the war to an end.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Very good. Congressman Hastings.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I too will be brief. Lady Bush, following Congressman Houghton's question about assets, do you and your colleagues have any estimate as to whether or not any of the warlords or their major supporters do have assets in the United States?

Ms. BUSH. Can my colleague answer?

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Chairwoman, she is asking—would you identify yourself for the record?

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. No problem. Just identify yourself and your role, and you can speak.

Mr. KAI. My name is Matthew Kai and I advise Lady Bush. I am the advisor to the President. Definitely as the Chairlady said, we do have some of the warlords who live in New England, in fact Charles Taylor lives in Massachusetts, not far from where we live. His wife, not his current wife, the one before this, lives not too far from me. Yes, they had a home. And we know of family members that have homes in the United States.

And while I have you, one quick thing I wanted to point out is the fact that this is a Liberian problem that must be solved by Liberia. I tried to reflect on history in modern times and I do not remember any war where the warlords came together upon their own will and said we will now stop fighting. Some greater power came and encouraged them to stop the war, Bosnia, Haiti, Somalia, Nicaragua, the same thing.

And that is why we are appealing for it. We have demonstrated clearly that we cannot stop this war on our own or else we would have stopped it in 1989 to now. That is why we appeal to the greatest power there is now to come and use the same good will used to stop the other war for Liberia. We just cannot solve it because the majority of the people do not have the guns.

Mr. HASTINGS. You seem to intimate that there may be some assets here. Do you know of any other country where they may have husbanded their assets?

Mr. KAI. Well, we were informed that some of them do have the family in Europe, Britain specifically. You may have read at one time Doe's former wife, the former President's wife was in Britain. We have been told in recent times that some of the warlords have their children in school in Switzerland. So, yes, I think if we want to access that information given the intelligence and availability of the computer technology, we can access the information.

Mr. HASTINGS. I just offer as an observer more than as a policy-maker, Lady Bush your request for an embargo on the shipment of arms as my colleague Chairman Payne has already indicated, an embargo of sorts has been in place, but it has not been enforced. It is very difficult, it really is to enforce these things. We have a very difficult time keeping guns from going in and out of the United States. And our experience with embargoes is such that for every place you close off another place opens up.

On the other score, humanitarian relief, my fear is if we do not do what you say, and that is find some means for the international community to intervene in a meaningful way, the people who do the hard work on the ground, the NGO's, the non profit organizations, I mean, we can talk if we want to, but I do not know that I want to deliver medical supplies and be shot at when all I have—

I mean, when the doctors without borders determined that they would come out of Liberia and I have been in areas of the world, particularly in Africa where they were there and fired upon but they felt at least that there was some safety. When they pulled up stakes, that frightened me no end because that meant that the last barrier of people who are willing to stay in conflict had left.

Now, you and I know, you being a nurse, that the disease that is likely to follow is going to require a whole lot more to cover up than just bullet holes. It is going to be outbreaks that are going to create serious problems. I only say that, I don't know how we appeal to the warring factions to get them to understand. If nothing more, let the humanitarian aid flow. Otherwise, they ultimately imperil themselves. And I thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Congressman Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Yes. Let me just say that I do think that we have gotten a tremendous number of calls and meetings with people from Liberian ancestry and I think that the stepping up and making your voices heard as American citizens wanting there to be more attention to Liberia I think is very important.

And I think that also the McNeil-Lehrer show last week gave a 10- or 15-minute history of Liberia which I received several calls from people in my district who were not African American who were totally unaware of the relationship between Liberia and the United States and also had a different opinion that maybe the United States should be doing more.

And so I think many times we expect people to know what we know, but many people do not know the facts. And I think that more attention being brought to the issue is certainly helping the situation. I know the friends of Liberia are some of the people who came to visit with me and we will continue to push for. And I thank once again the Chairlady for calling this hearing.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Congressman Payne. Thank you, Lady Bush. And we have a series of votes, but we thank you so much for coming with us on short notice and giving us the perspective on the Liberian American community. Thank you.

Ms. BUSH. And I thank you all for allowing us to come.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Bush appears in the appendix.]

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 3:59 p.m. the subcommittee hearing was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

Statement by
CONGRESSMAN DONALD M. PAYNE
Subcommittee on Africa
"Crisis in Liberia"
May 8, 1996

Thank you Madame Chairwoman, I want to welcome Secretary Moose, I understand that he has recently arrived back from Liberia. Liberia has not been on the landscape of our international agenda for some time. With the aftermath of the executions of Ken Saro-Wiwa in Nigeria, and the problems of the refugee crisis in Eastern Zaire it is easy to forget that we still need to heal the wounds of a civil war in Liberia now in its sixth year.

The history of Liberia is very unique in that Liberia was founded by liberated black slaves from the United States and became independent on July 26, 1847.

Since the fighting broke out on April 6, more than 400,000 people have died, 2.3 million residents have been displaced in the six and a half year conflict. Three days ago we were told that the fighting had stopped for now and the people were returning to their homes; however, today the fighting is still going on in the capital of Monrovia.

One of the early reasons given for the continued fighting was the complaint that the ECOMOG Peace Keeping Forces are dominated by the Nigerians. The origins for this distrust was the cordial relationship between the Nigerian Military Government headed at that time by General Babangida and Sergeant Doe. Babangida was one of principle actors for the setback of democracy in Nigeria.

The United States would be very correct in warning all factions that further fighting will not be tolerated, and that we will not support any government that comes to power by force in Liberia.

We have already pledged 30 million dollars to the areas of equipment and contracted training and I think this money is good if ECOMOG demonstrates a renewed capacity to play a neutral and effective peacekeeping role.

I look forward to hearing the testimonies from the witnesses, thank you.

**Remarks of Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy
House Africa Committee
House Committee on International Relations
May 7, 1996**

I would like to open by thanking the Chair very much for calling today's hearing. I thank Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen as well for her continued leadership on issues of concern to Africa and for her hard work on this and so many other important international issues. As well I thank Congressman Ackerman for his dedicated interest in Africa and for his assistance on this pressing issue.

Today's hearing is prompted by the recent outbreak of violence in Liberia. All of us are deeply troubled that the most recent peace settlement broke down and that violence has once again erupted in Liberia. For too long, too many innocent people have been the victim of a vicious and devastating civil war.

The international community has a responsibility to act. While we must recognize the limits under which we must operate, we can not stand by in the face of such suffering. At this time I do not think that direct military involvement is the best course to pursue, but we must not reject other options that could yield promising results.

I congratulate the Administration for the tireless work it has undertaken to bring a lasting peace to Liberia. I commend the Administration for seeking the active support and involvement of our allies. We must continue to press other nations to do all they can to resolve this serious problem, and I stand ready to assist the Administration in this task.

Today's testimony will provide Congress an opportunity to hear what is going on in Liberia and to begin to consider where we go from here. I am ready to work with colleagues, both on and off the Committee, to find ways that Congress can offer meaningful assistance to the peace process in Liberia. Today is the beginning of a process of addressing this pressing tragedy. I look forward to working with the Chair, Ranking Member Ackerman, and the other members of this Committee on ways we can respond to this crisis.

I am particularly honored today to have a constituent of mine, Lady Johnnet Bush, appearing before the Committee to offer testimony. Rhode Island is home to one the largest Liberian communities in the United States. For too many Rhode Island families the violence in Liberia is a terror that has taken the lives of family, loved ones, friends, and old neighbors.

Shortly after the recent outbreak of violence I met with Lady Bush and other members of her organization. She is dedicated to the cause of peace. I am very pleased that she is able to appear today, and again thank the Chair for her willingness to expand today's witness list to include Lady Bush.

Today's testimony will not be easy to listen to. We have before us a tragedy. We have before us a challenge to respond. Thank you for being here.

TESTIMONY BY GEORGE E. MOOSE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS
HEARING ON LIBERIA
BEFORE THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
May 8, 1996

Good afternoon. I appear before you today at one of the bleakest moments in Liberia's history. Monrovia, once a safe haven for more than one million civilians, lies in ruins, the result of fierce fighting by Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and Alhaji Kromah's United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO-K) rebels against Roosevelt Johnson's breakaway faction of ULIMO (ULIMO-J, comprised primarily of ethnic Krahnns). More than 80,000 Liberians have been left homeless. Thousands have fled or are trying to flee the fighting in the capital. At least 100 peacekeepers have lost their lives attempting to restore security in the city and its environs. At this point we do not know how many Liberian fighters and civilians who have been killed.

A U.S. airlift has evacuated more than 2,300 people from Monrovia, including 461 American citizens. The U.S. Embassy staff has been drawn down to 22 official Americans. All of the United Nations agencies, international organizations and non-governmental organizations compounds have been looted and their staffs forced to leave the country. In just three weeks the fighters, many of whom are child soldiers, have caused an estimated \$40 million dollars in damages, including \$20 million in equipment and supplies lost by relief organizations.

I want to take a moment to commend Ambassador William Milam and his staff at the Embassy in Monrovia, and the Department of Defense's Task Force for successfully carrying out the evacuation under very difficult circumstances. The Task Force was remarkably effective in getting the assets necessary for an effective evacuation in place in the region on very short notice. I also want to commend Ambassador Milam and his courageous staff for immediately stepping in to help deliver food, water and medical supplies to the homeless and displaced after almost all NGOs were forced to leave. Since April 10, the U.S. Embassy and World Food Program have delivered nearly 2,000 metric tons of food in Monrovia and surrounding areas, thereby averting a humanitarian disaster.

The Abuja Accord: What Went Wrong?

All of the Liberian warring factions signed the Abuja Accord on August 19, 1995. Although it was one in a long series of Liberian peace accords which have attempted to resolve the civil conflict begun in 1989, it held such promise. Charles Taylor and the Nigerians had resolved their differences and were on board, the faction leaders were beginning to work together on the Council of State to implement the accord's disarmament provisions, and the ECOWAS countries were committed to the peace process. What went wrong?

First and foremost, we now know faction leaders did not wholeheartedly commit themselves to the peace process but apparently pursued multiple strategies -- one for peace, the other for war. While pursuing a political solution as members of the new Council of State in Monrovia, they continued their high-stakes warfare in the countryside for control and exploitation of Liberia's rich resources -- timber, diamonds, gold, and rubber. In the meantime, faction leaders hid large caches of arms and munitions in Monrovia and brought hundreds of their armed fighters into the city as "bodyguards."

The West African peacekeepers (ECOMOG), who have been in Liberia since 1990 and are largely supported by troop-contributing countries, are responsible for providing security for Liberia and accomplishing the encampment and disarmament of combatants. ECOMOG troop size, which was around 10-12,000 when it successfully defended Monrovia in 1990 and 1992 from attacks and fended off a coup attempt by a Krahn general in September 1994, has been substantially reduced to about 5-6,000 troops. Some of the unpaid ECOMOG troops have gone into business for themselves. In December, ECOMOG troops were attacked and defeated by ULIMO-J rebels at Tubmanburg. ECOMOG suffered heavy casualties (as many as 60 soldiers may have been killed), lost much of its heavy equipment, and suffered a terrible blow to its morale.

Another significant factor was that overall support for the peace process, including support for ECOMOG, was slow in coming and has not been at the level we had hoped would be committed. At the October 27 UN Donors Conference, we pledged \$75 million dollars for the peace process, including \$10 million for logistical support (leased trucks and helicopters) for ECOMOG. Other potential donors were leary of committing significant resources up front given the failure of 12 previous peace accords. Still other donors had prohibitions on assistance to non-UN peacekeeping operations.

What We Are Doing

We consider the Abuja Accord -- an interim government, disarmament, demobilization, and the holding of free and fair elections -- the best framework for a permanent solution. Despite its current difficulties, we believe ECOMOG can again become an effective peacekeeping force.

We have strongly condemned the recent outbreak of fighting -- both in private conversations with faction leaders and in public statements -- and urged all the factions to restore the ceasefire, withdraw their fighters and weapons from Monrovia, and return to the peace process.

On April 21 we dispatched a high-level diplomatic team comprised of representatives from the State Department, National Security Council and the Joint Staff to work with Ambassador Milam and an ECOWAS delegation sent by Ghanaian President Rawlings to put the peace process back on track.

We have also initiated an International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL) which held its first meeting in Geneva April 26. The focus of the Contact Group's discussions was on how the international community could respond to recent developments in Liberia in a way which could positively influence the peace process. Representatives of 12 nations attended the first meeting; I was heartened by their commitment to continue to work for the cause of peace in Liberia.

From Geneva I went to Accra where I consulted with President Rawlings on how to get the peace process back on track. On April 30 I went to Monrovia to urge faction leaders to pursue their political objectives through negotiation, not force. Due to the fighting and uncertainty of the security situation I was unable to leave the Embassy compound. Although I did speak with Roosevelt Johnson, I was unable to reach Charles Taylor or Alhaji Kromah despite repeated efforts. They thereby missed an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to peace.

On May 3, in response to renewed fighting in blatant disregard of the April 19 ceasefire, we announced the reimposition of visa restrictions barring entry into the United States of Liberians, their families, close associates and others who obstruct the peace process. We are asking other members of the international community to implement a similar travel ban. We are also prepared to consider other measures to demonstrate our intolerance of the faction leaders' obstruction of the peace process. We have told faction leaders that we will not recognize any government coming to power by force and we will actively work with the international community to isolate, ostracize and reject, both politically and economically, any leader who comes to power by force.

Next Steps

The challenge that confronts the United States and other friends and supporters of Liberia is to give the Abuja peace process another chance to succeed. The situation in Monrovia must be stabilized. Fighters must withdraw from the capital and Monrovia must once again become a safe haven. Faction leaders must agree to abandon violence in favor of a political process for settling differences.

We will continue our vigorous support for ECOWAS' efforts to achieve a negotiated solution to the current crisis and to reaffirm a peace process which encompasses disarmament,

demobilization and the holding of free and fair democratic elections. As we speak, Special Presidential Envoy for Liberia Ambassador Dane Smith is representing the United States at a special ECOWAS emergency summit meeting in Accra to which all members of the Liberian Council of State have been invited. This meeting is a critical step in putting the peace process back on track. We hope the Accra summit will reaffirm the Abuja Accord as the best framework for settlement of the Liberian crisis, that ECOWAS countries will commit to applying even greater pressure on the factions to respect the peace process and that there will be serious discussion of bolstering ECOMOG's peacekeeping capabilities.

Ending arms flows into Liberia remains critical to halting the current fighting. We are pressing for tougher enforcement of the 1992 UN arms embargo and are asking other countries to join us in this effort.

We are also looking at ways to increase our support for ECOMOG. If ECOMOG can demonstrate a renewed capacity to play a neutral and effective peacekeeping role, we would be prepared to make available approximately \$30 million from existing resources in equipment and other additional assistance. Although some ECOMOG troops failed to do their duty during the recent fighting and may have participated in the looting, others performed commendably. I want to note again that more than 100 ECOMOG soldiers have died in the past three weeks in Liberia defending the capital.

In conclusion, Madame Chairman, for moral, humanitarian and political reasons, we choose to remain deeply engaged, even though we realize just how formidable the challenges have become. I want to stress the high priority this Administration places on returning Liberia to civilian, democratic rule. The people of Liberia have suffered too long from this tragic conflict. The time for peace has come. I want to thank you and other members of your subcommittee for your support for peace and democracy in Liberia and throughout Africa.

Liberia is an example of the risks and hardships faced by our people in the field every day as they seek to advance U.S. interests and protect American citizens. These are among the major issues at stake in the foreign affairs budget. If we are going to continue to be a leader in world affairs, we need the resources necessary to do so.

TESTIMONY
VINCENT D. KERN
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA,
OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 1996

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to talk briefly about the crisis in Liberia.

We find the current situation in Liberia very disturbing. Sporadic gunfire continues to be heard in the capital and thousands of Liberians have fled or are trying to escape the fighting in Liberia. Last Monday, fighters loyal to Charles Taylor again skirmished with fighters of Roosevelt Johnson near the U.S. Embassy compound. Several rounds, apparently directed, hit the perimeter of the Embassy. Some U.S. Marines, whose total is about 200 on the Embassy compound, fired back in self-defense; no injuries resulted from the in-coming rounds or those fired by the Marines.

Three earlier incidents involving U.S. Marines at the Embassy compound occurred on the afternoon and evening of April 30. In the first incident a Marine was slightly injured when a bullet grazed his neck (he has since returned to duty). In the second and third incidents the Marines returned fire at groups of armed fighters, killing five attackers and wounding a sixth. A Marine was slightly injured in the cheek from flying wood splinters when rounds hit a plywood cover (he too has returned to duty); no injuries resulted from the third incident.

U.S. forces operating in Liberia are under the general rules of engagement (ROE) for all U.S. forces deployed to a potentially hostile area. Those ROE include the right of self-defense including preemptive actions to ensure safety should someone show hostile intent.

An Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), consisting of three U.S. Navy vessels and a logistics ship, continues to operate off the coast of Liberia, approximately 25 miles offshore. There are some 2,200 Marines and 1,100 sailors associated with those ships. The ARG's normal rotation schedule would bring it back to the U.S. beginning mid-July.

The U.S. troops currently in Monrovia and off the coast are there to reinforce the security of the Embassy and to carry out the in extremis evacuation of American citizens. The U.S. has no intention of using our troops to stabilize the city or to perform other military functions off the immediate U.S. Embassy compound.

As Assistant Secretary Moose testified, U.S. forces have successfully evacuated over 2,300 people from Monrovia, 461 of whom are American citizens. We continue to evacuate Americans and selected third country nationals as they arrive at the Embassy.

The total cost for OPERATION ASSURED RESPONSE is not available at this time. Under a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Defense and the Department of State, the Department of Defense is collecting costs related to Liberia's Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO). Additionally, SECDEF has approved non-DoD, space-available travel via regularly scheduled milair between Freetown, Sierra Leone to Monrovia.

The U.S. has a long and proud history of humanitarian assistance to those in need. DoD possesses a unique capability for providing critical, specific assets while working as part of a U.S. coordinated interagency and international effort.

During FY95, the DoD Office of Humanitarian and Refugee Affairs, in support of NGOs and PVOs, shipped 320 tons of pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and supplies, and school supplies to Liberia.

Pending your questions, I thank you.

STATEMENT PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE SUB-COMMITTEE ON AFRICA

THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON, D.C.

BY

LADY JOINET BUSH, PRESIDENT

LIBERIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF RHODE ISLAND, INC

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 1996



Liberian Community Association of Rhode Island, Inc.

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On behalf of the Liberian Community Association of Rhode Island, I extend to you, Congress woman Ileana Ros-Leahin, chairperson, Congressman Gary Ackerman, Ranking Democrat, and members of this August Committee, our heartfelt appreciation for according us the opportunity to appear before this committee.

My name is Lady Johnnet Bush, President of the Liberian Community association of Rhode Island. I was born in Gibi Territory, which is now Margibi County. I also have ties with Bong, Nimba, and Grand Bassa Counties. I came to the United States in 1974 and have occasionally returned to Liberia.

I hold two associate degrees in Nursing and Business Administration, and two Bachelors of Arts degrees in Business Management and Marketing. I am currently an immunization outreach, crisis intervention, and social worker, and served on many boards and committees to include the Diabetes Professional advisory Committee, the NAACP, the Rhode Island Coalition for Immigrants and Refugees, the St. Joseph Hospital Community Liaisons Committee, the Elmwood Foundation for Housing, among others.

I was elected the first female president in the history of the Liberian Community Association of Rhode Island in 1991 and was reelected to a second term in 1993. Rhode Island has the largest number of Liberians in the United States. I also serve as a board member of the union of Liberian Associations in the Americas.

I must first thank the people of the United States through your committee for the role the United States has played in trying to end this war and restore peace to Liberia. As you are aware, the war has not ended. More than 13 peace accords have been signed by the warlords, and consistently violated with impunity. More than 200,000 individuals have died, mostly civilians-- women, children and the elderly making the larger percentile. Over a million Liberians have been displaced, properties have been damaged, and the economy is in shambles. Liberia has been ruined and is in total anarchy!

The suffering people of Liberia have worked assiduously and maintained their hope for a peaceful resolution to the conflict, but peace seems a light year away despite the many peace accords that the warring factions themselves have signed, and the interim government formed therefrom.

The peace keeping force, ECOMOG which ECOWAS sent to Liberia to maintain peace has been unsuccessful because of the warring factions' reluctance to cooperate with ECOMOG and ECOMOG's own inadequate funding, manpower, and logistics.

It has been proven that the warring factions themselves cannot cooperate with one another to bring peace. The victims are always the innocent civilians. Women and teen age girls have been raped and slaughtered. Unborn babies have been removed from the bellies of pregnant women by rebels who decide they must see the sex of the unborn child. There are hundreds of children, from age seven or younger, who are drugged and carry automatic rifles, killing indiscriminately. Children are dying from starvation, men are being castrated and everyone is being ostracized from the land they have always loved.

We have always depended upon you to help and have considered ourselves a protectorate of the United States. We need you more than ever to help bring this war to an end. We therefore appeal to you to.

- 1) intervene directly to bring this war to an end,
- 2) encourage the formation of a new interim government not including the warlords and individuals who have used the gun to inflict serious casualties upon innocent civilians,
- 3) use your economic, diplomatic and military leverages to encourage the warring factions to call for, and honor a true cease-fire and disarmament;
- 4) convene a meeting of the warlords to work out modalities for the enforcement of the cease-fire as in the case of Bosnia;

- 5) help plan, monitor, and enforce the disarmament process,
- 6) impose an embargo on the shipment of arms to any of the warring factions;
- 7) continue to provide humanitarian assistance, including medical services, food and water to the suffering population,
- 8) freeze all assets of the warlords, their family members and representatives;
- 9) deny all warlords, their family members and representatives visas to travel to the United States.
- 10) grant general amnesty to all Liberians currently in the United States, and,
- 11) help repatriate other displaced Liberians, plan and monitor free and fair elections and jump start the Liberian economy

We call on the United States, a country of goodwill that has practically resolved all conflicts in modern times, to do the same for Liberia. We are pleading. Please help us.

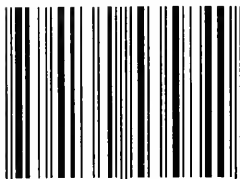


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